

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EA/TIMBS:HEMEINHEIT:EVC
APPROVED BY EA/TIMBS:DPSULLIVAN
HA - MR. SCHNEIDER (DRAFT)
H - MS. SWIFT (SUBS)

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 307976

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, TH

SUBJECT: RETURN TO THAILAND OF THAI JOURNALIST PANSAK
VINYARATN

1. IN LETTER TO DEPT, CONGRESSMAN DONALD FRASER WRITES THAT PANSAK VINYARATN, A THAI JOURNALIST WHO HAS LIVED IN THE U.S. SINCE THE 1976 COUP, INTENDS TO RETURN TO BANGKOK FOR A VERY BRIEF STAY AT THE END OF DECEMBER. THE PURPOSE OF PANSAK'S TRIP IS TO OBTAIN AN OFFICIAL RELEASE FROM DETENTION (AS EMBASSY AWARE, PANSAK WAS DETAINED WITHOUT CHARGES FOR 30 DAYS UNDER NARC ORDER 22 FOLLOWING THE 1976 COUP). CONGRESSMAN FRASER STATES HE HAS BEEN INFORMED THAT THE "THAI SECRET POLICE" HAVE PRESSURED PANSAK'S FAMILY FOR HIS RETURN BUT THAT PANSAK HAS BEEN ASSURED BY THE RTG THAT HE WILL BE ABLE TO OBTAIN HIS FORMAL RELEASE IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS ARRIVAL AND WILL BE ALLOWED TO RETURN TO THE U.S. FRASER HAS REQUESTED THAT THE DEPT INFORM HIM OF ANY INFORMATION INDICATING THAT PANSAK MIGHT BE REQUIRED TO
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REMAIN IN THAILAND.

2. PANSAK AND HIS WIFE, AN AMERICAN CITIZEN, HAVE ALSO INFORMED DEPT OFFICERS (HA AND EA/TIMBS) OF INTENTION TO RETURN TO BANGKOK, LEAVING WASHINGTON OF DEC 31 AND ARRIVING

BANGKOK ON JAN 2. IN CONVERSATION WITH TIMBS OFFICER,

PANSAK EXPRESSED SOME CONCERN OVER SUDDEN PRESSURE ON FAMILY FOR HIS RETURN BUT INDICATED PRIME MINISTER KRIANGSAK'S EMPHASIS ON NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WOULD MAKE IT UNLIKELY THAT HE WOULD BE REARRESTED. HIS CONCERN WAS THAT OTHER UNNAMED SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS WHO WERE LESS INTERESTED IN RECONCILIATION MIGHT SOMEHOW DELAY HIS OFFICIAL RELEASE AND PREVENT HIS DEPARTURE FOR THE U.S. PANSAK CONFIRMED TO DEPT OFFICERS THAT HIS FAMILY HAD RECEIVED ORAL ASSURANCES THAT HE WOULD BE ALLOWED TO RETURN TO THE U.S. AFTER HIS RELEASE, WHICH WOULD PROBABLY TAKE PLACE ON JAN. 3. HE ALSO SAID THAT HIS FAMILY HAD LEARNED THROUGH HIGH LEVEL CONTACTS WITH THE MILITARY THAT KRIANGSAK PLANNED TO OFFER HIM A JOB IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT. PANSAK DID NOT DIRECTLY NAME HIS FAMILY'S CONTACTS IN THE RTG, BUT HE IMPLIED THAT ONE OF THEM WAS LT. GEN. THUANTHONG SUWANNATHAT OF THE SUPREME COMMAND.

3. SINCE HIS ARRIVAL IN THE U.S., PANSAK HAS MAINTAINED A LOW PROFILE AND TO OUR KNOWLEDGE HAS NOT BEEN INVOLVED IN EXILE POLITICS. HE HAS MANY FRIENDS AND CONTACTS IN THE U.S. AND IF HE WERE TO BE DETAINED AGAIN BY THE RTG, HIS CASE WOULD ATTRACT CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION AND UNFAVORABLE PUBLICITY FOR THE RTG.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION YOU MIGHT HAVE ON THE RTG'S RENEWED INTEREST IN PANSAK
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AND SPECIFICALLY ANY INDICATIONS THAT HE MIGHT BE REARRESTED OR PREVENTED FROM LEAVING THAILAND. WE WOULD ALSO LIKE YOUR VIEWS ON WHETHER IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR AN EMBASSY OFFICER TO BE PRESENT AT THE AIRPORT WHEN PANSAK AND HIS WIFE ARRIVE AS A SIGN OF OUR INTEREST. VANCE

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